

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Chace Leather Products Inc

Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Chace Leather Products Completes Lean Pilot Project for Hard Case Production

Client Profile:

Chace Leather Product, Inc., is primarily a custom manufacturer of genuine leather and synthetic fabric instrument cases. It was founded nearly a century ago by Leonard Chace and remains in its original location in Fall River, Massachusetts. The company became ISO 9002 certified in 1998 and currently has 70 full time employees. Its philosophy of "Total Customer Satisfaction" is being carried on into the fourth generation with continued growth thru the introduction of expanded lines and the acquisition of related companies.

Situation:

The impact from imported products on Chace's market segment has led to a 25 percent reduction in their business over the past 5 years. Chace recognized the need to target the low volume specialty segment of their market where increased service and speed to market were essential. Thus, there was a specific need to improve the on-time-delivery performance to all their current customers. The Massachusetts Extension Partnership (MassMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, was introduced to Chace when Steve Chace, VP of Operations, attended the Lean Certification Series held by MassMEP at UMass Dartmouth in Fall River, Massachusetts.

Solution:

MassMEP proposed a Lean Pilot Project to specifically address "Hard Case" line and, in particular, the Motorola product line performance. Funds were used from a NETAAC grant to assist with the project. Lean 102 Timewise Workshop, Value Stream Mapping, and 5S Workplace Organization were presented.

Results:

- * Improved lead time, from 8 to 10 weeks to 6 to 8 days.
- * Improved first-time quality.
- * Decreased inventory control loss from 10 percent to 2 percent.
- * Increased on-time delivery from less than 50 percent to 95 to 100 percent.
- * Increased business with Motorola, Germany by 20 percent.
- * Anticipated cost savings of \$40,000.
- * Anticipated increased sales of \$100,000.

Testimonial:

"The experience of that first day of the Lean 102 Workshop was unbelievable. The folks that attended that class came back to work energized and focused on fixing all the problems quickly. We were able to utilize the focus of the Value Stream mapping and the 5S methodology to do much more than I expected in less than 6 weeks. The performance changes have been truly remarkable."

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Larry Walsh, President and CEO